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LETTER DATED 16 JANUARY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On 5 January 1996, on instructions from my Government, I informed Mr. Ismat Kittani, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Peace-keeping Operations, that the Government of Canada had decided not to participate in the renewed United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR). I am writing now to provide you with formal notification of this decision.

The decision to withdraw reflects the Canadian view that the mandate renewed in December 1995 is not viable, given the authorized force structure. In a statement to the Security Council on 12 December, I pointed out that force structures and mandates do not have separate existences. I further noted that, to reduce the strength of UNAMIR by one third, while maintaining a mandate essentially unchanged from the one it had received in June, was to create false expectations about what UNAMIR could realistically achieve. I concluded by informing the Security Council that, given these changed circumstances of a new force structure of inadequate and possibly ineffective capabilities, Canada would have to consider its options carefully regarding its own continued participation in UNAMIR.

My Government has concluded this review and has decided, for the reasons I cited, that it will withdraw the Canadian contingent from UNAMIR. Current plans call for the main body of the contingent and military observers to leave Rwanda on 2 February 1996.

This decision to withdraw from UNAMIR should not be construed as a lessening in any way of Canada's willingness to participate in the search for stability and security in the Great Lakes region of Africa or in our commitment to assist the Rwandan Government to rebuild its devastated country. It is, rather, a sign of our concern that the Security Council has not yet fully absorbed lessons learned from the recent past in peace-keeping operations. We do, of course, remain committed to United Nations peace-keeping and to improving the manner in which peace-keeping missions are planned, deployed and conducted.

I would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Robert R. FOWLER
Permanent Representative

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